



(S) NSA Hosts First Africa ROCK DRILL

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Intelligence producers and customers talk about Africa, identify areas needing attention. (S)

(S) NSA's first Africa-focused ROCK DRILL was a resounding success. A wait-listed crowd from NSA, customers and Intelligence Community partners enthusiastically discussed key issues of interest and concern and identified potential options for addressing critical resource challenges. Hosted by SID's Europe/Africa and Combating Proliferation Issue Management Teams (IMT), the ROCK DRILL ran for three days, from 23 - 25 May 2005 at NSA Ft. Meade.

(S) The purpose of the ROCK DRILL was to explore ways to optimize SIGINT capabilities to improve NSA's responsiveness to customers' information needs. Each day had a different focus and began with a series of briefings dealing with the focus area of the day; day 1 focused on Sub Saharan Africa, day 2 on North African Extremists and Countering Terrorism, and day 3 on Combating Proliferation with a focus on biological terrorism challenges involving Africa and Europe and possible spread to other continents.

(S) Specific scenarios designed to stimulate discussion among the participants followed the briefings and prompted rich discussion of issues and challenges. Among the issues emphasized were the critical need for multi-INT, multi-agency collaboration and partnering, the importance of sharing information and intra- and inter-agency coordination, and an awareness of existing policy impediments and work-arounds.

(S) Multiple organizations within NSA participated along with the European Command [12](#), US Air Force Europe, European Security Center, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Geospatial Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, State Department, National Counterterrorism Center, and Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center.

(S) Overall, **three major themes** emerged from the ROCK DRILL. First was acknowledgement that, while strategically important from the perspectives of counter terrorism, regional stability, energy resources, world health, economic stability, and global power competition, among others, **Africa enjoys a relatively low national priority**. Resource commitments across the community reflect that priority.

(S) The paucity of resources is especially acute when it comes to the second major theme, **lack of linguists**. There are over a hundred languages and dialects spoken on the African continent. NSA has only a handful of qualified linguists to cover a few of the languages spoken. This lack of linguists severely limits the SIGINT system's ability to exploit the communications of key targets.

(S) The lack of resources and especially the lack of linguists leads to the third major theme, **partnering**. In order to successfully satisfy the information needs of our customers NSA must expand its partnerships. Traditional and non-traditional allies and partners, from not only the SIGINT community, but from other intelligence disciplines, the diplomatic community, and law enforcement, must be engaged to leverage their access, language, and processing capabilities. The next step is for NSA to develop strategies to address these major themes.

(S) This was the first in what is intended to be a series of Africa ROCK DRILLS that will assist NSA in improving SIGINT support to its customers. As an initial effort the ROCK DRILL has already achieved the near term goal of bringing together players across the community. The road ahead looks much brighter in light of the collective interest across the community for robust collaboration and cooperation on Africa.

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